

# Lehigh County Juvenile Justice System Community Report

Making Good Choices Edition ■ Summer 2005

## Reckless Behavior Addressed In Youth Forum

A unique forum to educate juvenile probationers about the consequences of reckless behavior and underage drinking was recently conducted by the Lehigh County Juvenile Probation Department. Held on June 20 in the Lehigh County Government Center, the event provided the audience of 87 youths with graphic glimpses at the tragedies that can result from bad decisions concerning the use of alcohol and drugs.

Among the first-hand experiences shared with the group was that of one juvenile probationer who was involved in a vehicular homicide. Because of that singular bad decision, the young man will now live the rest of his life knowing that he was responsible for the tragic loss of an innocent life.



*Lehigh County Coroner Scott Grim discusses the tragic outcomes of drug and alcohol-related cases he has investigated.*



*Lisa Simon, Educational Specialist with Valley Youth House speaks to local juvenile probationers about hazards associated with underage drinking.*

Another presenter speaking from life experience was Lisa Simon, an Educational Specialist for Valley Youth House. A victim of a DUI case involving underage drinking, Lisa spoke about the hazardous outcomes of binge drinking, including alcohol poisoning and blackouts. She also effectively conveyed the physical and emotional pain she experienced when a DUI offender impacted her own life.

Perhaps the most moving examples of the destructive potential in reckless behavior were presented by Lehigh County Coroner Scott Grim. Showing projected photos from cases he has investigated, Mr. Grim's presentation drew audible gasps of shock at the horrific deaths resulting from drug and alcohol-induced behavior.

The forum was held in recognition of National Probation, Parole and Community Supervision Week. This national observance of the probation and parole professions was held July 17 to 23 and carried the theme: "Community Safety with Care and Concern." ■

*Written by Andrew J. DeAngelo  
Deputy Chief Probation Officer*

## Mission of the Juvenile Justice System

*"Juvenile Justice:  
Community Protection,  
Victim Restoration,  
Youth Redemption."*

**Community Protection** refers to the right of all Pennsylvania citizens to be and feel safe from crime.

**Victim Restoration** emphasizes that, in Pennsylvania, a juvenile who commits a crime harms the victim of the crime and the community, and thereby incurs an obligation to repair that harm to the greatest extent possible.

**Youth Redemption** embodies the belief that juvenile offenders in Pennsylvania have strengths, are capable of change, can earn redemption, and can become responsible and productive members of their community.

Furthermore, all of the services designed and implemented to achieve this mission and all hearings and decisions under the Juvenile Act – indeed all aspects of the juvenile justice system – must be provided in a fair and unbiased manner. The United States and Pennsylvania Constitutions guarantee rights and privileges to all citizens, regardless of race, color, creed, gender, national origin or handicap.



## Youth Talents Blossom in New Program with Baum School of Art

The artful talents of several Lehigh County Juvenile Probation Department clients were in full bloom this past spring thanks to a new partnership with Allentown's Baum School of Art. The program enabled City of Allentown probation clients aged 14 to 18 to participate in instruction at the art institution. This rewarding new alliance was developed as an intervention program for clients who would otherwise be unable to afford art classes. Our intent was to develop a program for probationers to realize their personal strengths and enhance their self-esteem through the discovery of artistic talents brought forth by professional instructors. After meeting with Ann Lalik, Baum's Director of Educational Programs and Gallery Exhibitions, the vision took shape aided by funding through the Project Safe Neighborhood Grant.

For most students, this was their first brush with art. Under the direction of Baum School instructor Sean Mazzatta, students engaged in 2-hour art classes weekly over a span of 10 weeks. Sean proved to be both inspirational and motivational, mentoring each student and providing a personalized educational approach for each of his students. He encouraged students to bring in their sketchbooks to share with the class and used these to showcase each individual's unique artistic style. Students became more eager to discuss their art accomplishments as a result of Sean's positive focus on the individual artists.



*The new art program was developed to help probationers realize their personal strengths and enhance their self-esteem.*

During each class, students were introduced to the works of a different artist and the style which made his or her work notable. The emphasis was on artists of diverse backgrounds; once introduced to these profiles, students were better able to relate to the works and how they could influence their own art achievements. Once they learned about the different techniques, they went to work creating projects in the genre of the profiled artist. These budding artists were exposed to a variety of techniques, including painting, drawing and pottery.

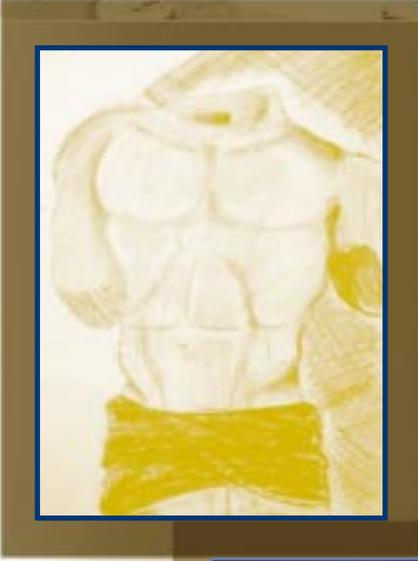
Horizons broadened as several students' whose previous interests were primarily drawing realized how much they enjoyed the other modes, particularly pottery.

The Baum School of Art truly became a refuge for participants during the critical after-school hours when temptations loom large. Oftentimes, students would come to class early, just to get a head start on their projects. In full evidence were the benefits of positive reinforcement through individual attention, validation and esteem building. Each student reaped the rewards of a job well done and were genuinely excited to show off their achievements.

This initial foray into the world of art for clients of the Lehigh County of Juvenile Probation Department ended when classes concluded on June 8, capped by a display of their artwork in the Lehigh County Government Center. But it is not the end of the program. We are now planning to expand the existing program and continue this valuable partnership with the Baum School of Art in the fall of this 2005. ▀

*Written by Shannon Semmel and Lacey Binkley  
Probation Officers*





## From the Editor...

The Juvenile Probation Department provides community-based supervision and services for the communities of Lehigh County. In addition to the activities reported in this newsletter, the department is involved with a number of other community agencies and concerned citizens to assist our youths in discovering that change is possible.

### Community Involvement is Welcome!

If you are interested in volunteering to work with our youths as a mentor or a tutor, or to provide a community service work site, please contact:

The Lehigh County Juvenile Probation Department  
610-782-3143  
Andrew J. DeAngelo, Deputy Chief Probation Officer



**Lehigh County  
Juvenile Probation Department**  
455 W. Hamilton Street  
Allentown, PA 18101

# Community Report

## African American Museum Proves Insightful for Educational Field Trip



*African American Museum presentation*

To commemorate Black History Month in February of this year, Juvenile Probation Officers Vince Pioli and Matt Styles organized an educational outing for several youths to the Central Pennsylvania African American Museum in Reading, PA.

The theme of the exhibits presented by resident historian Frank Gilyard, Sr., was "From Slave Ship to Space Ship." It proved to be an apt title as Mr. Gilyard traced the evolution of Black History from the era of freedom-seeking runaway slaves and the underground railroad, through the groundbreaking achievements of African Americans in subsequent decades up to today. This talented presenter's enthusiasm never waned throughout his lecture and all in attendance were enriched by his depictions of the sacrifices made by these Americans in their quest for freedom. Of particular note was an actual slave refuge in a underground pit where they would hide from the bounty hunters hired by slaveowners. ■

## 2005 Victim Benefit Golf Open a Swinging Success

Whitetail Golf Club in Bath, PA was alive with local links talent as 67 golfers participated in the 2005 Victim Benefit Open sponsored by the Lehigh County Juvenile Probation Department on Friday, May 27, 2005. The event raises money for victims of juvenile crime in Lehigh County. Thanks to the generosity of participants, local businesses and organizations which donated prizes, more than \$3,400 was raised during this year's outing. Among the fund-raising revenues were those from hole sponsorships made possible through the generosity of these community-minded organizations and individuals:

- Bethlehem Volunteer Firemen's Home Association
- Children's Home of Reading
- Frank Datillo
- Law Offices of Huber & Waldron
- James Perkins
- Perseus House
- Preventive Measures
- Stonehenge, Inc.
- The Bridge
- Vision Quest
- Youth Services Agency

Our sincere thanks to all sponsors and golfers who helped make this a success! ■

*Participant in tournament*

